

OrdnanceReports

News updates from around the world



April 21, 2003



This publication is produced by the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Communications Coordinator. The purpose of this publication is to provide Command Information materiel concerning world events and the U.S. military's role in those events. Ordnance specific events will be covered if appropriate. Direct your correspondence to Ed Starnes at 410-278-2415 (DSN 298-2415), or email edward.starnes@ocs.apg.army.mil.

Former POWs arrive home

Spc. Joseph Hudson, top raised a clenched fist as he and Pfc. Patrick Miller, bottom, held a U.S. flag atop a C-17 Globemaster airplane as the seven former POWs returned to U.S. soil April 19 at Biggs Army Airfield. Photo by Mark Lambie, El Paso Times.



Former POW Chief Warrant Officer David Williams, left, meets his family after his arrival at Biggs Army Airfield at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, Saturday, April 19, 2003. Seven former prisoners of war returned home Saturday to a crowd of flag-waving family and friends, one week after they were rescued in Iraq. (AP Photo/LM Otero)



Former POW Shoshana Johnson with her daughter, Janelle, soon after her arrival at Fort Bliss. Photo by Ruben R. Ramirez, El Paso Times.



Edleen Aguilera, right, girlfriend of Spc. Edgar Hernandez, held a banner with family and friends at Biggs Army Airfield Saturday. Photo by Rudy Gutierrez, El Paso Times.

White House opens egg roll to children of troops

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The children of U.S. troops fighting in the war in Iraq and other military families descended on the White House South Lawn on Monday for the annual Easter egg roll, which was not open to the public this year for security reasons.

President Bush and the first lady, who were spending the long Easter holiday weekend at their Crawford, Texas, ranch, did not attend the annual event.

In their place was Lynne Cheney, the wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, who welcomed the estimated 12,000 guests and read from her alphabet book, "America: A Patriotic Primer."

"Your parents are very brave," she told a group of the children. "We're so proud of them."

President Rutherford B. Hayes officially opened the White House grounds to children for egg rolling on Easter Monday in 1878. The annual tradition has been canceled only due to poor weather and during World War One and World War II.

The war in Iraq and the threat of terrorism prompted the White House to restrict this year's festivities to military families, officials say.



The truncated event was another example of how the public has largely been cut off from access to the White House by the Bush administration in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

In recent years as many as 40,000 people, mostly children from local schools, have taken part in the event.

The security situation is such that public tours of the grand mansion have been eliminated except for those set up for schools whose administrators

must first get permission from their members of Congress.

Pennsylvania Avenue is a warren of police barricades, and tourists can no longer walk on the sidewalk in front of the house's tall gates.

Gunmen fire on U.S. base in Afghanistan

by D'Arcy Doran

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP) - Gunmen fired on the main U.S. base in Afghanistan on two occasions over the weekend and one U.S. soldier was wounded in a separate incident, an army spokesman said Monday.

The shootings were among several attacks on coalition forces across Afghanistan by remnants of the ousted Taliban regime and their allies.

A Special Forces soldier was treated in Orgun, 110 miles south of Kabul, for a gunshot wound to the thigh, said the spokesman, Lt. Col. Doug Lefforge. He did not say how the soldier came to be wounded.

A man also blew himself up Sunday trying to plant a land mine on a road near a U.S. base in southern Kandahar. Also Sunday, six rockets were fired at a U.S. base near Shkin, 140 miles south of the capital, in Paktika province, Lefforge said.

At Bagram Air Base, a man standing on the roof of a building in an Afghan army compound shot at a vehicle as it left the base Sunday, Lefforge said.

In a separate incident, another man fired off two rounds near the base's south gate, Lefforge said.

No one has been detained in connection with the attacks and no further information was immediately available, he said.



PRESIDENTIAL WELCOME — President Bush puts his arm around Chief Warrant Officer David S. Williams as he speaks to the media with Chief Warrant Officer Ronald D. Young Jr., left, and Laura Bush, first lady, after attending Easter church services at the 4th Infantry Division Memorial Chapel at Fort Hood, April 20. Williams and Young are former POW's. White House photo by Eric Draper .

Ordnance soldier's brother killed by grenade

Soldier's death in Iraq can't break brothers' bond

Story and photo by Kevin Dougherty, Stars and Stripes

BASHUR AIRFIELD, Iraq — His gear at his feet, U.S. Army Pfc. David Foley stood stoically on the concrete airfield ramp waiting for a lift out of Iraq.

It was dusk Saturday, and in less than an hour, a C-17 aircraft would land to take Foley a step closer to his parent's home in western Tennessee. He looked tired. He felt numb.

On Friday, at the airfield in Kirkuk, a sergeant major, his unit's first sergeant and another soldier approached the Bradley mechanic from Vilseck, Germany, and summoned him into a room, away from the others.

"I thought I had a mission," the 22-year-old said. "I was tired of being bored."

Instead, an Army chaplain walked in.

"When the chaplain came in to meet me, I knew something was up," Foley said.

A moment later he was sitting in a chair, trying to contemplate the death of his older brother, his only sibling.

They didn't tell him much, uttering something about privacy. He recalls hearing "south of Baghdad" and "a few days ago," but that was it.

"I'm going to find out," Foley said. "I just hope it wasn't something stupid, like friendly fire."

Spc. Thomas Arthur Foley III, 23, fought for 101st Airborne Division out of Fort Campbell, Ky. He died April 14 from an accidental grenade explosion south of Baghdad. He was assigned to the division's 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment.

Foley said he introduced Thomas to his future wife, Paulette. Last fall, the couple was blessed with their first child, a son they named Logan.

Foley took the tragic news like a soldier. The Army is a hardened group. It has to be, in most cases.

"I sat down for five minutes," he said, "and I shed about three tears. Then I got up and said, 'What do I have to do to go home?'"

Senior members of Task Force 1-63 Armor, an immediate ready force based in Vilseck and the unit Foley is attached to, made it a priority Saturday to get him to Bashur airfield.

The Air Force's 86th Expeditionary Contingency Response Group, which controls the base, got Foley a seat on the next plane bound for Germany. From there, it's a plane ride away from the United States.



U.S. Army Pfc. David Foley, based in Vilseck, Germany, was deployed to Kirkuk, Iraq, when he learned Friday that his older brother, Spc. Thomas Arthur Foley III of the 101st Airborne Division, died near Baghdad.

"I like [the Army] so far, except for the distance from home," he said as the airfield buzz intensified during shift change. "But there is no telling where I go from here."

The younger Foley never intended to make the military a career.

His brother, on the other hand, had spent nearly four years in uniform, and had raised his right hand for three more. Thomas Foley was a mechanic, too, but he also operated a Humvee equipped with a turret to fire Stinger missiles.

Joining the Army "was one of the best things he ever did," David Foley said of his brother.

Marrying Paulette was the best of all, especially since they didn't hit it off right away, according to their matchmaker.

"At first, she didn't like him. She said his attitude was all wrong," said Foley, who described his brother at that time as "obnoxious, loud, an attention getter, but he always knew when to quit."

Meeting Paulette changed his life, and his attitude.

"He did everything he could for her," Foley said.

The brothers were close in many ways. They were born a year and 17 days apart. The last time they spoke to each other was by phone on March 20, two days after David turned 22.

"I wanted to take his place [on the front lines] because he just got a family going," Foley said. "He told me that if anything happened to him, I should take care of his wife and kid, but nothing prepares you for what happens. It's just unreal."

Asked what enduring memories he has of his brother, Foley laughed as only a kid brother could. They fought often growing up. Many brothers do.

But they always — always — made up on the spot, and then would

continued on page 4

Ex-general: water, power priority in Iraq

by Charles J. Hanley

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Taking up his duties as Iraq's postwar civil administrator, retired U.S. Lt. Gen. Jay Garner toured a Baghdad hospital Monday and said his priority was to restore basic services such as water and electricity.

Garner landed at the former Saddam International Airport after a short flight from Kuwait, 12 days after U.S. tanks and troops secured the Iraqi capital and brought down Saddam Hussein's government.

"What better day in your life can you have than to be able to help somebody else, to help other people, and that is what we intend to do," Garner said upon arrival.

As his plane touched down, black clouds of smoke still drifted through Baghdad's skies from fires set by looters in a lawless city.

The 65-year-old former general, after weeks of preparatory work in Kuwait, came to his new post under tight security and gave little information about planned meetings or travels.

From the airport, he visited Baghdad's 1,000-bed Yarmuk hospital, which was overwhelmed with Iraqi casualties in the final days of the war. Its wards, including the coronary and respiratory care units, were then stripped of almost everything by looters.

"We will help you, but it is going to take time," Garner told doctors.

Some were unimpressed.

Soldier's death in Iraq can't break brothers' bond continued

head for the neighborhood park to shoot hoops, or into the house to play video games.

Their stepfather, Brian Darden, is a veteran of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. He and their mother are proud of the boys. Now they have to bury one of them.

"I know my brother is not coming back," Foley said. "The next time I see him he will be in an open casket."

Death had tapped Foley on the shoulder about a week before he deployed, when an older soldier — a mentor — was killed in a car accident in Germany. Now his only brother is gone.

"The finality is going to take me down for awhile, but I'll bounce back," he said. "They say death comes in threes. I just pray that won't be the case."

Kevin Dougherty is embedded with the Air Force at Bashur airfield in northern Iraq.



Retired US Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, left, is received by US Maj. Gen. Glen Webster upon his arrival in Baghdad, Iraq Monday April 21, 2003. The 64-year-old Garner will head the civilian administration that will start the uphill task of rebuilding the nation and prepare the way for an Iraqi government, although no date has yet been fixed for the handover of power. (AP Photo/Odd Andersen/Pool)

"If they give us anything it is not from their own pockets. It is from our oil," said a female doctor, Iman. "Saddam Hussein was an unjust ruler, but maybe one day we could have got rid of him and not had these foreigners come into our country."

After visiting other sites in the city, Garner went in the late afternoon to the Faw Palace - a grand, yellow stone structure surrounded by a moat - where he was to spend the night.

Garner arrived with about 20 top aides, including his British deputy, Maj. Gen. Tim Cross. His staff is to grow to about 450 over the next week as others arrive by overland convoy from Kuwait to set up the full Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Aid.

The ORHA is to coordinate delivery of outside assistance to the 24 million Iraqis; oversee rebuilding of the nation's infrastructure, in disrepair from a decade of U.N. sanctions, neglect by Saddam's regime and three weeks of U.S. bombing; and oversee the establishment of an interim Iraqi government.

For ordinary Iraqis, however, the first needs are for water and electricity - knocked out during the war - and, especially, for security in a city wracked by almost two weeks of looting.

"We've got a chaotic situation in Baghdad," Adnan Said Youssef, 50, said as he arrived for Easter Mass at a Baghdad church. "The Americans have to take control and end this instability."

As U.S. Marines withdrew in recent days, Army troops moved in to

continued on page 5

Ex-general: water, power priority in Iraq continued

take jurisdiction over all Baghdad and have joined in patrols with a revived Iraqi police force to try to suppress the pillaging and vandalism.

Garner said his priority was to restore basic services such as water and electricity as soon as possible. Garner, who will report to Central Command chief Gen. Tommy Franks, said he intended to complete his work and leave as soon as possible, but declined to give a timeframe.

“We will be here as long as it takes. We will leave fairly rapidly,” he said.

In a small sign of returning normalcy, one power plant in northeast Baghdad was operating Monday, providing power to an oil refinery and a nearby district. Traffic lights came to life, though they were temporarily stuck on red.

At the city’s major electrical plant, Maj. Andy Backus of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers told Garner workers had managed to restore power to only 1 percent of the city, but “hopefully, this evening we will have the lights on in 10 percent of Baghdad.”

In Washington, Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said installing a strong democratic system will require at least five years because the United States did not plan adequately for the postwar period.

“A gap has occurred, and that has brought some considerable suffering,” Lugar said.

The Americans’ most difficult challenge undoubtedly will lie in trying to forge a peaceful, cooperative structure among Iraq’s political, religious and ethnic factions.

That challenge should become obvious in the coming days, as hundreds of thousands of Iraq’s majority Shiite Muslims gather in the holy city of Karbala for an annual feast whose celebration was curtailed under the three-decade rule of Saddam’s Baath Party, which was dominated by Sunni Muslims.

Shiite leaders - who are strongly opposed to the U.S. military presence, though pleased to see Saddam go - have called for political demonstrations during the holy days, which run from Tuesday to Thursday.

No Iraqi figures have spoken out in support of a strong U.S. role in the coming months.

Even Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the U.S.-financed Iraqi National Congress exile grouping, has described Garner’s job as one of getting Iraq’s infrastructure and services back in shape “in a few weeks,” after which Iraqis would take over and the Americans would be limited to military roles.

But how Iraq will produce an interim administration remains unclear. The U.S. government sponsored a meeting of anti-Saddam representatives last week in the southern city of Nasiriyah, but some

Shiite leaders and other figures boycotted the session, attended by Garner, in a protest against U.S. influence.

A recently returned exile, Mohammed Mohsen al-Zubaidi, declared Sunday that he was Baghdad’s new mayor and that he had formed a municipal government. But Barbara Bodine, the U.S. coordinator for central Iraq, traveling with Garner on Monday, said: “We don’t really know much about him except that he’s declared himself mayor. We don’t recognize him.”

Garner, a Vietnam War veteran, was serving as president of a defense contractor, SYColeman Corp., when he was tapped for the Iraq job in January. He ran Operation Provide Comfort, the relief mission to feed and house hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees who fled their northern Iraq homes in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War.



South Korean soldiers patrol inside the barbed-wire fence at the Imjingak Pavilion, north of Seoul, near the demilitarized zone (DMZ) of Panmunjom, South Korea, Monday, April 21, 2003. South Korea announced plans Monday to hold high-level talks with North Korea next week after U.S. President George W. Bush gave diplomatic pressure a “good chance” of succeeding in persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear ambitions.(AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon).

U.S. victory highlights Russian weakness

by Vladimir Isachenkov

MOSCOW (AP) - There's a message to the Russians in the swift defeat of Saddam Hussein's military, which was modeled on the rigid Soviet war machine.

The triumph of a high-tech adversary has spotlighted the weakness of Russia's own crumbling armed forces and strengthened the hand of radical reform advocates.

"The Iraqi war has proven once again that a volunteer contract force equipped with state-of-the art weapons and using modern tactics can fulfill any task ... and do it with minimal casualties among civilians," said liberal lawmaker Alexei Arbatov, a leading advocate of a Russian volunteer army.

When the war began, Russian generals forecast a long and fierce battle and expected the United States to suffer massive casualties if it stormed Iraqi cities. Just a week before Baghdad fell, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov extolled the strength of the Iraqi army and said a U.S. victory was "far from certain."

"There were expectations of a new Vietnam," said Yuri Fyodorov, a deputy director of the PIR-Center, an independent Russian think-tank.

Russian generals and diplomats, who also predicted an all-out battle for Baghdad, drew on Russia's own botched experience in the storming and virtual destruction of Grozny, the Chechen capital.

"The U.S. victory in Iraq has become an unpleasant surprise for the Russian political and military elite," said Yevgeny Volk, head of the Moscow office of the Heritage Foundation, the U.S. think tank.

The Iraqi army closely copied the Soviet organization and tactics and was equipped with mostly Soviet-built tanks, aircraft and missiles. Although official military contacts were severed after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, two retired Russian generals visited Baghdad to advise its defenders, according to Russian media reports. They later acknowledged the visit but denied serving as military advisers.

Many Russians say their army suffers from the same weaknesses that contributed to Iraq's defeat - badly maintained weapons, poorly trained troops, rigid command and poor coordination.

Retired Gen. Andrei Nikolayev, head of Parliament's defense affairs committee, said the Russian army is similar to the Iraqi army in its low morale and lack of motivation.

"Go on the street and ask who is ready to defend the motherland and you will immediately see unpleasant parallels," he said. "The outcome of a war depends on army's morale."

In an article published this week in the daily Nezavisimaya Gazeta, commentator Maxim Glikin recalled his own experience in the Soviet military in the late 1980s, saying he and his comrades would have surrendered just like Saddam's soldiers.

"We would have thrown away our rifles and changed into civilian clothes before an aggressor approached our unit," Glikin wrote.

The Russian military has declined steadily since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, lacking funds to modernize weapons, hold exercises and even properly feed and dress servicemen.

Miserable conditions and rampant hazing of young conscripts have led to suicides, desertions, shootouts and widespread draft-dodging. All Russian men aged 18-27 are required to serve two years in the military, but 90 percent avoid the draft.

President Vladimir Putin has sought to reverse the meltdown by ordering a gradual transfer from the draft to a volunteer force by 2010. But the top brass are stubbornly defending a bulky, Soviet-era military on a meager budget equivalent to \$11 billion this year. In contrast, Soviet defense spending stood at the equivalent of \$155 billion in 1991, the year of the Soviet collapse, according to official statistics. Some Western experts believe it was even higher.

In stark contrast with the computerized, satellite-guided U.S. military, the Russian army's arsenals are of Cold War vintage, precision weapons are few and tactics largely imitate the World War II patterns. A lack of fuel and spares has grounded aircraft and left most navy ships to rust in port.

While the top brass is using the Iraqi war as a pretext to plead for more funds, critics are urging the military to further trim ranks, dump excessive weapons and radically streamline its bloated, antiquated structure.

"Pumping more cash into the outdated defense structure would be a useless waste of money," said Konstantin Kosachev, deputy head of Parliament's foreign affairs committee.



Iraqi police officers guard a bank in central Baghdad Monday April 21 2003, suspecting that more looters were hiding inside. As U.S. Marines withdrew, Army troops moved in to take jurisdiction over all Baghdad and have joined in patrols with a revived Iraqi police force to try to suppress the pillaging and vandalism.(AP Photo/Dusan Vranic)

Special guards for a special family

by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau, Special to American Forces Press Service

ARLINGTON, Va., April 18, 2003 – Everything he has learned about the military during his quarter-century in the West Virginia Army National Guard has made 1st Sgt. Dan Little a friend in need and a friend indeed for the family of former POW Pfc. Jessica Lynch.

Little is also a first cousin to Gregory Lynch, Jessica's father, and he has been by the family's side ever since they learned March 23 that the young woman was missing in the war zone.

"Greg and I grew up together," Little said. "We hunted and fished and camped and hiked together when we were kids. I just had to help. I was very concerned about Jessie."

The veteran noncommissioned officer lives a dozen miles from the Lynch family's home in Palestine, W.Va. He has helped explain the Army's procedures and terminology to this ordinary American family that found itself at the center of an extraordinary event during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It's been a lot counseling. The family has asked me what does this or that really mean. This has been my focus ever since that night," explained Little.

He's a full-time Army Guard aviation technical inspector in Parkersburg, as well as the top sergeant for the 66 members of the 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation's Charlie Company in Wheeling, W.Va.

Little has not been alone. Other members of the West Virginia Army Guard have ridden part or all of the emotional roller coaster with the Lynch family. They were on board for the agonizing days of not knowing if Jessica was alive or dead, for the ecstasy of learning she had been rescued and for the joyous reunion at a military hospital in Germany and the return to the good old USA.

They include Maj. Bill Crane, Maj. Mike Cadle, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Dana Kees, and Command Sgt. Maj. Bruce Coleman. They have helped the family through its ordeal since Lynch and other members of the Army's 507th Maintenance Company were captured or killed by Iraqi forces after taking a wrong turn in southern Iraq that day.

Crane was the notification officer who delivered the chilling message to the family at 11 p.m. March 23: "The secretary of the Army regrets to inform you that your daughter's whereabouts are unknown and that she was last seen in Kuwait."

Cadle is the West Virginia Guard's public affairs officer who helped the family meet the press that came from across the country and around the world. The media quickly discovered the two-story house where the Lynches live on the western edge of West Virginia and when and where they would be in Germany.

Kees, a Guard recruiter, was the casualty assistance officer who made it his business to find out about any new developments involving Jessica and to tell her father, mother, brother and sister if

there was anything or nothing new to report.

Coleman, the West Virginia Army Guard's state command sergeant major, was at Fort Bragg, N.C., at the right time to drive Jessica's brother, Pfc. Gregory Lynch Jr., home to Palestine on emergency leave the day or so after his sister was reported to be missing. The brother enlisted in the Army at the same time his sister did and is a helicopter avionics and electronics technician at Fort Bragg.

Cadle and Little flew to Germany with the family on April 5, four days after a U.S. special operations forces rescued the badly injured Lynch from an Iraqi hospital.

The two Guardsmen returned to this country on April 11, the day before Jessica and her family landed at Andrews Air Force Base and were taken to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

Little was still with the family at Walter Reed in mid-April when, he explained, Jessica was bravely going through the difficult process of physical rehabilitation, determined to soon walk again on her own.

Many things have impressed the Guard members who, Cadle explained, were pressed into the demanding duty because there are no active Army installations in West Virginia.

"Jessica's father was very stoic when I told the family she was missing. That made it easier for me," recalled Crane upon making his very first notification after undergoing the training about six months earlier. "Her mother knew something was wrong as soon as she opened the door and saw me.

"As concerned as they were about their daughter, her parents never stopped telling people to remember and pray for and support the other service people who had been killed and wounded, and the prisoners of war," Cadle said. "Her father repeated that message during a hundred interviews. They were overjoyed about the rescue of the other POWs."

"The Guard took the point of the spear at the very beginning, and the National Guard family in this state has been phenomenal. Everyone has asked how they can help," Little said.

"Jessie may have gone into the active Army, but the Guard community has taken her as one of their own," he added. "They have already made it very clear that they are waiting to support her when she comes home."

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Britain's Royal Marines leaving Iraq

KUWAIT CITY (AP) - After winning some of the Iraq war's hardest fighting, Britain's Royal Marine Commandos began packing up hovercraft and landing vessels Monday to begin a long journey home.

The departure over the next few weeks of the 2,000 troops of the 3rd Commando Brigade - among the British army's best-trained forces - is quiet proof that the war is over.

Relative stability has come to the British sector in the southern city of Basra, the Faw peninsula and the vital port of Umm Qasr. Reconstruction and peace-building will be left to engineers and civil affairs troops.

Still grimy with sand that just won't wash off, troops of the brigade's 530 Assault Squadron spoke on the docks of a Kuwaiti naval base about what they're looking forward to.

Carpet under my feet," mused Sgt. Eddie Cochrane, 34, of Plymouth. "No sand. Walking the dogs. Seeing my 1-year-old son, Thomas - he wasn't walking when I left."

Cpl. Phil Smith, 38, of Market Drayton in Shropshire, envisions a beer and plans to "basically chill as much as possible."

"I want to get home to my family, that's the main thing," said Smith, 38, missing his wife and two teenagers. "Then some Italian food, cold weather - and a hot shower. We haven't had a hot shower in three months."

The 3rd Commando Brigade was in the thick of the war at the outset, and eight members died in an American helicopter crash in the first hours.

Other units roared over mud flats in the Faw peninsula with squat, black hovercraft and employed grappling hooks to tear down obstacles of barbed wire and steel girders.

The noisy, low-slung craft moved so fast over the marshland that when they triggered mines, they had usually passed over them before the devices exploded.

The commandos destroyed an Iraqi brigade and caused others - demoralized at the prospect of defeat - to surrender or just disappear, said Lt. Col. Nick Antony, commander of the assault squadron.

"They fought pretty hard for four days, then slacked off when they realized they weren't going to win," said Antony, 38, of Abbott's Ann, Hampshire.

"I think that everybody can be justifiably proud of what they achieved," Antony said.



British Marines from the 539th Unit out of Plymouth, relax as they prepare to leave back to home on Monday, April 21, 2003. The unit's commanding officer Lt. Col. Nick Anthony said that "their job was done, and it was time to go home." The unit secured the Faw Peninsula in southern Iraq and secured Umm Qasr and Basra in the war to free the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein and his Baath Party regime. (AP Photo/Stephanie McGehee/Pool)

The brigade's last fatality came 10 days into the war, when President Saddam Hussein's paramilitaries launched a rocket-propelled grenade at a hovercraft in a marsh ambush. The troops are pretty certain that nobody survived the riposte.

"We determined they were positioned behind a mud hut," Cochrane said. Indicating the 7.62 mm machine gun mounted on the front of a hovercraft, he added: "We cut it in half."

The squadron's four hovercraft have been scarred by bullets and shrapnel and generally beaten up by weeks of hard use - and by a 16-hour slog in choppy seas Sunday from Iraq to a naval base south of Kuwait City.

Marines were preparing to load them Monday - along with four drop-ramp landing vessels capable of carrying a Land Rover and four bigger ones that can haul a tank - onto a ship making a six-week trip to Britain.

The soldiers will fly home and the entire brigade should be back home by mid-May to overhaul their gear and get ready to redeploy, wherever, by Aug. 1.

They are as proud of the fighting they didn't do as the engagements they won. Long experience of patrolling the rough streets of Belfast, Northern Ireland, taught British troops that winning hearts and minds means easing up on firepower.

Philippines bars U.S. troops from combat

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Philippine government Monday prohibited U.S. troops from joining soldiers on combat patrols during counterterrorism exercises planned for later this year on Jolo, a southern island where Muslim militants are active.

The ban marks a change from last year, when American soldiers joined Filipino army units on combat patrols during similar exercises on nearby Basilan island.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the new policy is meant to “emphasize that it will be the Filipino soldiers who should be doing the fighting.”

Philippine officials fear U.S. troops could be drawn into skirmishes, violating a constitutional ban on foreigners fighting in the former U.S. colony.

When asked whether Washington would agree to Philippine restrictions on American soldiers, Reyes said, “This exercise is being held in Philippine territories so what the government says and what the president says is what will be done.”

Unidentified Pentagon officials caused a political storm earlier this year when they said U.S. troops would engage in combat against the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim extremist group loosely linked to al-Qaida and notorious for kidnappings and killings.

Philippine officials quickly issued denials, but the U.S. statements led to widespread public opposition to this year’s exercises, especially on Jolo, where hundreds of Filipino Muslims died fighting American colonial forces in the early 1900s.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said the maneuvers on Jolo would focus on civic projects, intelligence cooperation and training to evacuate Filipino soldiers wounded in combat.

The annual exercises, called Balikatan or “shoulder to shoulder,”

Britain’s Royal Marines leaving Iraq continued

When the commandos entered Umm Qasr, Basra and other southern Iraqi towns, they immediately settled into police-style street patrols and doled out what water they had.

Within hours, local people were warning them of ambushes planned by Saddam loyalists. In one case, a man used hand signals to point out the positions of guerrillas equipped with a grenade launcher and machine guns. The would-be assailants were killed or captured.

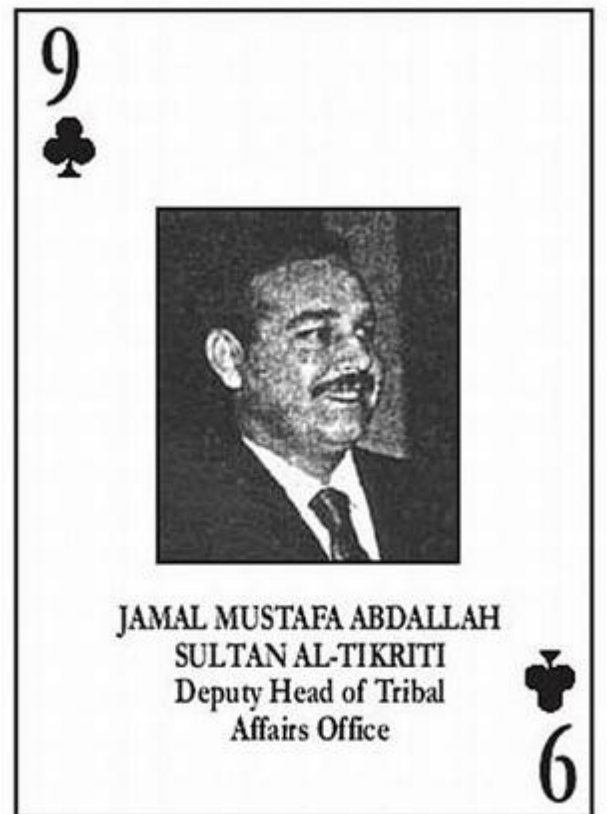
The Baath party leadership in Basra was destroyed by a 2,000-pound guided bomb dropped on a house fingered by a local person who said a meeting was being held there, Antony said.

“We couldn’t have done what we did without the support of the locals,” Antony said. “We’re quite used to doing this in Northern Ireland, but this is their back yard. We wouldn’t have known who these people were.”

were held on the main northern island of Luzon until last year, when the longtime allies decided to shift them to Basilan to help Filipino soldiers better fight the Abu Sayyaf.

Counterterrorism training and weapons provided by the U.S. military last year were credited with decimating the Abu Sayyaf’s main faction on predominantly Muslim Basilan. But many rebels survived a U.S.-backed Philippine offensive and moved to Jolo.

Arroyo said this month that Jolo would be the venue of this year’s exercises. She said militants on Jolo have ties to terrorist cells in central Mindanao island, where a recent spate of bombings and ambushes has left hundreds of people dead and injured.



Saddam Hussein’s son-in-law Jamal Mustafa Sultan Abdullah al-Tikriti appears on the “nine of clubs” in the set of playing cards issued by the US military authorities to help capture the most wanted leaders of Saddam’s former regime. Al-Tikriti has surrendered in Damascus, Sunday April 20, 2003 and was being brought back to Iraq, said a spokesman for the Iraqi National Congress in London. The government spelling is on card. (AP Photo/US Central Command,HO)



Marrero Ricardo, 31, a soldier from Puerto Rico, receives a flower from Iraqi Dilan Farman, 2, in the town of Kirkuk, Iraq on Friday, April 18, 2003. Ricardo's rank was unavailable. Photo by Hasan Sarbakhshian, AP.

Meddling with MRE menus, a matter of taste

by Kristen Guss, Defense Logistics Agency

FORT BELVOIR, Va. (Army News Service, April 21, 2003)—Beginning with contract production runs in June, the Defense Logistics Agency will add new Meals, Ready to Eat menus, while eliminating others.

The changes were in response to the likes and dislikes expressed in Army surveys taken by soldiers in the field.

The new entrees include Pork Rib and Sauce, Vegetable Manicotti and Roast Beef with Vegetables.

Entrees being eliminated include Jamaican Pork Chop, Pasta Alfredo and Beef with Mushrooms. However, the current stock of MREs will be used until exhausted.

The MRE is a pre-packaged operational ration designed to sustain an individual engaged in heavy activity such as military training or during actual military operations when normal food service facilities are not available. It is totally self-contained and consists of a full meal packed in a flexible meal bag. The full bag is lightweight and fits into military field clothing pockets. Each meal bag contains an entree and a variety of other useful items, such as chewing gum, matches and moist toilette.

Except for the beverages, the entire meal is ready to eat. While the entree may be eaten cold when desired or necessary, it can also be heated in a variety of ways, including submersion in hot water while still sealed in its individual entrée package. Since Operation Desert

Storm, a flameless ration heating device has also been packed into each meal bag to heat the entrée.

Each meal bag contains the components of one meal. Soldiers who are engaged in heavy activity normally consume three MREs a day.

In its ongoing effort to be responsive to its customers, DLA provides several types of MREs tailored to different dietary requirements.

The Meal, Religious, Kosher or Halal, is provided for individuals in the military services who maintain a strict religious diet. Each meal consists of one Kosher or Halal certified entree and religiously certified or acceptable complementary items sufficient to provide the recommended daily nutritional requirements. There are two vegetarian meals in every box of MREs which supports those troops who, for various reasons, cannot consume meat.

Special Humanitarian Daily Rations are also produced and distributed to displaced persons or refugees under emergency conditions. These packs contain enough food to sustain a moderately malnourished person for one day.

In support of Iraqi Operations, the Defense Logistics Agency's Defense Supply Center Philadelphia has shipped approximately 30 million individual menu bags of MREs. If the menu bags were laid end to end, these MREs would go around the world 228 times. DLA has also procured and begun distribution of more than 4 million Humanitarian Daily Rations.

Service to the line, on the line, on time!
U.S. Army Ordnance Corps 1812 - 2003

Wrestlers put smile on wounded GI's face

by Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 21, 2003 – When Army Pvt. Fernando Gonzalez heard that professional wrestlers “Bradshaw” and “Faarooq” were visiting Walter Reed Army Medical Center recently, he got excited and asked for them to visit his hospital room.

Gonzalez, 18, who was shot in his left thigh five days after arriving in Iraq, said he has been an avid wrestling fan since he was a kid. But he noted that he hasn't had a chance to watch many matches since joining the Army.

Calling Bradshaw and Faarooq his favorite wrestlers, Gonzalez said, “They’re one of the greatest tag teams. I like the way they wrestle.”

The Riverside, Calif., native, joined the Army in August 2002 because, “That was the best thing for me to do, at the time,” and it was “a stepping stone going into law enforcement.”

He said he didn't opt to become a military policeman because “the scout job caught my attention. I like riding around in a humvee, doing reconnaissance. It's exciting. It gives me an adrenaline rush. It's a challenge.”

The 3rd Infantry Division soldier entered Iraq on March 19 and was shot five days later.

“I was wounded in my left thigh in a town called Samawah,” the teenager told Bradshaw and Faarooq. He was treated in the combat area and then medivaced to Kuwait. After further treatment at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, he arrived at Walter Reed on April 6.

The wrestlers asked him if he would rejoin his unit in Iraq if he could, Gonzalez said, “Definitely! I miss those guys.”

Before leaving Gonzalez's bedside, Bradshaw and Faarooq gave him a WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) T-shirt, which put a big smile on the wounded soldier's face.

Gonzales said later, “They're pretty big guys, but they're real people. They're really down-to-earth people and they're easy to talk to. The fact star wrestlers visited me makes me feel good.”

The tag team of Ron “Faarooq” Simmons and John Bradshaw returned to World Wrestling Entertainment, or WWE, in February as “The Acolytes.” Both had been out because of injuries.



Wrestlers “Faarooq,” right, and “Bradshaw” pose with Army Pvt. Fernando Gonzalez after presenting the wounded soldier a WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) T-shirt during a visit recently to his room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

Photo by Rudi Williams

Bradshaw said, “When I was on a USO tour, I told Sgt. Maj. (of the Army Jack L.) Tilley that I feel bad about never being a soldier. He said the main thing is every American has got to find what they can do to support our guys.

“This is what I figure I can do; I love these guys,” Bradshaw said. “These guys give us the freedom we enjoy. They have to live an abnormal life in places where they don't choose to live sometimes because they're fighting for our freedom.

“So this is my way of saying thank you very much to these guys for what they've done,” the popular wrestler said. “They've done a hell of a lot.”

Bradshaw said his first impression when he first saw wounded service members was compassion. “It's amazing that these guys are willing to do this,” he said. “And the main thing they want to do is go back, which is amazing.”

Asked what prompted him to visit hospitalized wounded soldiers from Iraq, Faarooq said, “Why wouldn't you come to visit these guys? For what they're doing for us over there, sacrificing their lives, this is the least I could do. I wish I could do more.”

Faarooq and Bradshaw then rushed off to visit another wounded soldier.



***\$640 MIL** – U.S. Army Maj. Rodney King, Provost Marshall's Office, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), displays U.S. currency found April 19 in Iraq in what was described as a tool shed. The approximate value of the find is \$640 million. The currency will be secured and transported to a secure location. US Army photo by Cpl. Thomas Bray*



Packed bumper to bumper, thousands of 1st Armored Division trucks, trailers and other support gear are moved by barge from Mannheim, Germany to seaports in the Netherlands, where they're loaded aboard ships for the long haul to Kuwait. Photo by Jon R. Anderson, Stars and Stripes.



U.S. Marines enjoy the view of an artificial lake and palaces inside Saddam Hussein's Presidential Palace compound in the northern Iraqi town of Tikrit, Tuesday April 15, 2003. AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis)



A picture of Saddam Hussein sits in a pile of books and papers as a student cleans up damage left by looters at the Saddam High School in Kirkuk, Iraq Monday April 21, 2003. Students and officials have been cleaning up schools damaged in recent weeks in preparation to reopen them. (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)